

THERE IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of managing a voice mode conference call between users of terminals which are organized so that they can communicate with each other in packet mode by means of the Internet protocol or an equivalent protocol in the context of a communication system and in particular via an arrangement adapted to enable them to be connected in a conference call and then to receive a signal from each of the terminals participating in the conference call and to broadcast the signal from a temporarily chosen terminal to the other terminals, in which method regular and transparent detection of voice activity in the compressed signals from the conference call terminals determines the received signal whose energy level is the highest of the energy levels considered at a given time, as defined by voice coding parameters for each signal included in the packets by means of which they are transmitted.
2. The method claimed in claim 1 wherein voice activity is detected in a useful real time protocol part of respective packets received from said conference call terminals and time stamps individually assigned to said packets enable said packets which have time stamps that are identical, or nearby and quasi-identical, given the scale of the detection function for determining the signal having the highest energy level from the received signals considered to have identical time stamps at the same given time, to be determined.
3. The method claimed in claim 1 employing a voice activity detection function including a threshold hysteresis for temporarily favoring a terminal whose signal was broadcast until then because it had the highest energy level if the signal from another conference call terminal reaches an energy level higher than that of said signal broadcast until then.
4. A conference unit enabling simultaneous communication between a plurality of user terminals of a communication system by means of the Internet protocol or an equivalent protocol in the context of a one-at-a-time conference call in which only one of the respective signals sent in the form of packets by the conference call terminals is selected at a given time to be broadcast to the other terminals participating in the conference call, which arrangement includes:
  - voice activity detector means for determining the energy level of the speech signal sent by a user terminal from voice coding parameters included in successive packets by means of which said signal is transmitted, and
  - means enabling it to determine from among the transmitted signals considered at a given time the transmitted signal whose energy level is the

highest.

5. The conference unit claimed in claim 4 including means enabling it to fix a threshold hysteresis for temporarily favoring a terminal whose signal was broadcast until then because it had the highest energy level if a signal from another conference call terminal reaches an energy level higher than that of said signal broadcast until then.
6. The conference unit claimed in claim 4 incorporated into a user telecommunication terminal.
7. The conference unit claimed in claim 4 incorporated in a unit of a telecommunication network node.
8. The conference unit claimed in claim 4 incorporated in a unit connected to a shared telecommunication link and in particular to a unit of a link forming a loop local area network.